



STEAMBOAT SPRINGS
CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION, INC.

March 7, 2014

Ms. Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission

Subject: Expression of Interest - FCC Rural Broadband Experiments

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association, on behalf of Northwest Colorado Broadband, Inc. (NWCBS), is pleased to submit this expression of interest in participating in the Federal Communications Commission's Rural Broadband Experiments. NWCBS is a Colorado non-profit organization formed in 2012 to increase broadband capacity, reduce cost, and provide redundant middle mile services and open last mile infrastructure for the benefit of its members and the broader community. NWCBS members include key public and non-profit community service entities in Routt County, Colorado: the City of Steamboat Springs, Routt County, Steamboat Springs School District, Yampa Valley Medical Center, Yampa Valley Electric Association, and Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association. We work collaboratively with the State of Colorado, neighboring counties, and Northwest Colorado Council of Governments on broader statewide and regional broadband planning efforts.

To date, with funding from public and private sources, NWCBS has developed a carrier neutral location (CNL) to host middle mile broadband services, extended a nine bundle, 96 strand fiber connection from our sole ILEC (CenturyLink) to the CNL, and, through a competitive process, selected Resort Internet to provide middle mile broadband service to meet the approximately 5 gigs of combined broadband demand of CNL participants. By aggregating demand, participants can capitalize on volume and competition to drive down the cost of broadband services. The CNL is expected to go live this spring, providing redundant and ample broadband capacity to serve the future needs of participating entities at a cost equivalent to their current budget allocations.

While NWCBS has made great progress, there is much more to do, with very limited local resources to achieve ample, redundant, and affordable broadband access in our rural area of Northwest Colorado. Routt County, with an area of 2,632 square miles and a 2010 population of 23,509, contains large areas that are unserved or underserved. Key community service providers and employers within the county lack last mile fiber connections and are unable to use voice over IP technology. Where service is available, redundancy is a major issue. With single physical fiber paths to key hubs, outages are devastating to the local economy. An eight-hour outage in October 2012 had an estimated economic impact of \$800,000. These service deficiencies inhibit the region's economic development and undermine the efficient delivery of essential public and community services. This letter outlines several key projects that will address a number of these deficiencies and facilitate delivery of improved residential and commercial broadband access and voice over IP service.

Applicant: Northwest Colorado Broadband, Inc., a Colorado non-profit corporation. NWCBS anticipates partnering with an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier at the time of formal application.

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Governmental participation: The City of Steamboat Springs and Routt County will participate in project planning and implementation, and facilitation of required permitting.

Proposed Service Area: County 8107, Census Tracts 000100, 000200, 000300, 000500, 000600, 000700, 000800. Potential customer base: approximately 23,000. Proposed projects would serve Community Anchor Institutions including the City of Steamboat Springs, Routt County, Steamboat Springs School District, Yampa Valley Regional Airport, Routt County Justice Center, Routt County Sheriff's Office, Yampa Valley Medical Center, and Yampa Valley Electric Association.

Proposed Broadband Technology and Services to be Offered: Broadband at a minimum of 4 Mbps down, 1 Mbps up, with much higher levels of service for commercial and institutional users and in more populated residential areas; voice over IP where broadband capacity allows

Proposed Routt County Projects:

1. Yampa Valley Medical Center Last Mile Connection, Steamboat Springs

Yampa Valley Medical Center is a regional hospital located in Steamboat Springs. As a member of Northwest Colorado Broadband, the medical center could benefit from access to the new carrier neutral location in downtown Steamboat, but lacks a fiber connection. Currently, the hospital is unable to fully deploy voice over IP or key patient care systems due to limited band-width and a lack of a back-up, high-capacity broadband connection at competitive rates. This project would provide a physical fiber connection from the carrier neutral location to the medical center. This connection is necessary to allow radiologists to do timely readings of studies; to share critical patient information with care sites in the region; and to reduce overall costs of healthcare by sharing information and reducing redundant tests. Nearby residential neighborhoods would also benefit from the availability of this last mile connection, as the medical center can host a back-up carrier neutral location that can be a connection site for capacity that is currently unavailable on the east side of the City.

Estimated cost: \$300,000

2. Yampa Valley Regional Airport Last Mile Connection, Hayden

Yampa Valley Regional Airport (YVRA) offers commercial flights as well as general aviation service to Steamboat Springs, Hayden, Craig, and the entire Yampa Valley. The airport is located in Hayden, approximately 22 miles west of Steamboat Springs off Highway 40. Currently, the airport lacks a direct last mile fiber connection to deliver critical broadband capacity for aviation activities. This project would provide a physical fiber connection from a trunk in Highway 40 to the airport.

Estimated cost: \$200,000

3. Routt County Justice Center and Sheriff's Office Last Mile Connection, Steamboat Springs

Routt County Court facilities, the Sheriff's Office and County detention facility are located on the west side of Steamboat Springs, without a last mile fiber connection to access the broadband capacity needed to support critical law enforcement and judicial functions. This project would provide a physical fiber connection from Highway 40 to the Justice Center/Sheriff's Office.

Estimated cost: \$170,000

4. Voice over IP Service

This project would allow NWCB's carrier neutral location to aggregate phone service as well as bandwidth demand at the carrier neutral location. This would facilitate cost-saving VoIP service to participating health-care, education, public safety, governmental and community members of the NWCB, as well as public entities throughout Northwest Colorado. In Routt County, this has the potential to reduce Federal phone line subsidies to CenturyLink that total approximately \$1 million for Routt County. This project would install a VoIP platform at the NWCB CNL (carrier grade server/software).

Estimated cost:

One-time \$40,000

10-yr recurring: \$120,000

5. Last Mile to Underserved and Unserved Areas

Routt County has populated areas that cannot access broadband service, or have limited service. This project would benefit both residential and commercial customers by subsidizing the deployment of last mile connectivity via physical fiber connections or wireless technology to bring broadband and VoIP capability to a portion of these unserved and underserved areas. Colorado Mountain College is an important community institution that would benefit from this expansion of last mile broadband infrastructure.

Estimated cost: \$175,930

Total High-Level Cost Estimate:

One-time	\$ 885,930
Recurring	120,000
Total	\$ 1,005,930

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the FCC Rural Broadband Experiments. Our community has built an effective collaborative organization to address broadband access, redundancy and cost issues. We look forward to broadening our scope, adding FCC funding and an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier to our partnership in order to expand community access to broadband and voice over IP service. By doing so, we can move closer to achieving the economic and social outcomes that rely on effective communications in today's world.

Sincerely,



Tom Kern
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